



# Illinois Veteran News

An Update from the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs ★ November 2017

## ★ From the Director



Erica Jeffries

Like every year, November has been a very busy month for all of us at the IDVA. For the second year in a row, we held our Serving Those Who Served program with great success! Numbers are still coming in, but from 5-11 November, we know we conducted a lot more service projects than last year - over 80 statewide! Not only that, thanks to some wonderful sponsors, we were able to award mini grants for all of the projects that applied this year! From painting cannons at our Quincy Veterans Home, to placing a new roof on a disabled veteran's home in the Peoria area, our Illinois residents proved once again that they truly care for our Illinois Veterans and their families.

Thanks also to all of you for inviting us to join you at your Veterans Day programs, services, events, Galas and celebrations recognizing our Veterans. We feel honored to be your partner and to be included with so many wonderful programs!

As December approaches, we're gearing up for the year ahead beginning with the launch of "Honor 200." In partnership with the Illinois Bicentennial, this program is an opportunity to recognize 200 Illinois Veterans from all across our great state. Veterans who have continued to serve long after hanging up their uniforms. You will find more information on this Illinois Bicentennial Signature Program in this newsletter.

I have had the privilege of working as the Director of IDVA for nearly 3 years. What an incredible metamorphosis we have seen at IDVA during this time. I cannot say enough about our superb staff of nurses, doctors, VSOs, administrators and staff! Each team member has taken the responsibility for improving IDVA's quality of care and patient safety and service to our Illinois Heroes to exceptional levels. I am so proud of the work we do every day and I'm excited about the future as we continue to help veterans and their families to thrive.

As you gather around your tables this Thanksgiving, please remember our brave men and women who are currently serving - many of whom are in harm's way. Because of their sacrifice and service we can enjoy our holiday and time with our families. All of us at IDVA thank our military members for their service and pray for their safe return home.

I am thankful for each and every IDVA employee and from my family to all of yours, I wish you all a wonderful and very happy Thanksgiving holiday!

Our mission at the IDVA is very simple. To serve those who have served. In doing so, we serve not only the men and women who have worn the uniform, but also their families. It is our privilege to be able to help our veterans receive the benefits they have earned through service to our nation. Our goal is to empower our veterans and their families to thrive in all aspects of their lives.

We know there are many veterans within our great state who do not require any assistance – but we still want to encourage you to "Stand Up and Be Counted!" by registering with your local VSO. In doing so, you're helping IDVA to do a better job of planning for services, seeking federal funding and understanding the needs of our veteran communities statewide. [Click here to register.](#)

**We Thank you for your service and for your sacrifice and we at the IDVA look forward to offering our services to You.**



# ★ News from Home

## Quincy Veteran Home



Noah Stull's Eagle Scout project was erecting a flag pole and stone planters in the Shirley Northern Memorial Garden at the Illinois Veterans Home in Quincy. Noah completed the impressive project. Pictured with Noah is Senior Vice Commandant of the Gem City Detachment 790 Marine Corp Wayne Griep and IVHQ resident Pauline Kmack. Thank you, Noah, for this wonderful gift!

The North River Old Iron Club (Tractor club) hosted a Tractor Show at the Illinois Veterans Home at Quincy on Sunday, October 1st. Each resident could vote for their favorite tractor. The winner was Quinn Pinn with his 1206 Farmall Tractor. Go Red!



Marine Corp League Gem City Detachment 790 held a Halloween Dance the Quincy Veterans Home last month. Everyone was encouraged to dress up for Halloween.



## Marine Corps Dance

(L - R) Gladys Ericson, wife of resident Bob Ericson, Margie Griep, wife of Marine Corp League Member, Betty Turner, resident, Luke Dolleman, Marine Corp League member, Leonard Jarrett, resident, Karen Koteck, resident

## Anna Veterans Home

The Anna Veteran Home needed a new large blanket warmer. The Catholic War veterans donated \$4,000 and the home received other donations earmarked for the warmer. But the home was still short \$5,000 to make the purchase. When the United Mine Workers found out the home needed \$5,000 more, they held several fundraising events and brought our Administrator Angela Simmons a check for the balance needed! Thank you to UMW, Catholic War Veterans and others for assisting us with these wonderful donations!



This is a picture of the Anna Veterans Home float that won first prize in their local Veteran's Day Parade. The theme was Women Who Served. The lady in the center is Kay Krug, the Anna Home's only female veteran. She served as a WAAC in World War II and then reenlisted during the Korean War. Thank you, Ms. Krug, for serving this great country!

## ★ Honor 200



In partnership with Illinois Bicentennial and the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs

The Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs and the Illinois Bicentennial Committee announced that they will honor the work of 200 veterans from across the State of Illinois, whose contributions are above and beyond the call of duty as they dedicate their time and energy to assist their fellow veterans and service members.

Nominees are evaluated based on their achievements, and on the extent to which their contributions have aided, benefited and provided inspiration to their community at large.

To register your honorably discharged Illinois Veteran, go to [www.illinois.gov/veterans](http://www.illinois.gov/veterans) for guidelines and a nomination form. All 200 Veteran honorees from across the state of Illinois will be recognized at the Bicentennial Gala at the United Center in Chicago on December 3, 2018.

## ★ Life after deployment

If you are like many Illinois service men and women, you probably started making plans for your life back home soon after you were deployed. Looking forward to your future is an important coping mechanism, especially in challenging situations. But here's one thing you probably didn't plan for: everything you've experienced during your tour has come home with you, too. In the war zone you worked with precision, under punishing conditions. But now, at home, a dripping faucet or misplaced car keys raises your tension level. Your patience is tested when your toddler drops her sandwich on the floor. This isn't how you used to react to minor inconveniences. This isn't you.

Regain your normal life Do you want life to get back to normal, but you're not sure what normal is anymore?



The Illinois Warrior Assistance Program is here to help 24/7. Call 866-554-IWAP (4927) now to get the help that you so richly deserve. IWAP is a confidential resource provided by the State of Illinois. It is not connected to the U.S. Armed Forces or the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.



## ★ IDVA Calendar

- 11/30-12/02 Manteno Veteran Home Christmas Bazaar** – *Manteno, IL*
- 12/04 Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony Gold Star Family Event** – *JRTC, Chicago, IL*
- 12/07 National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day 76th Anniversary** – *Springfield, IL*
- 12/13 Illinois Veterans' Advisory Council Meeting** – *IDVA Offices, Chicago and Springfield*
- 12/25 Christmas** – *State Offices Closed*
- 12/26 Kwanzaa begins**
- 01/01 New Year's Day / Kwanzaa ends**  
– *State Offices Closed*

Find details about all these events and others on our Events page of our website -

<https://www.illinois.gov/veterans/about-us/events/Pages/default.aspx>

## ★ New employees

### Patrick C. McFadden

Patrick McFadden is the VSO in McLean County. He is originally from Cerro Gordo which is small town mid-way between Decatur and Monticello. A veteran of the US Army, the largest portion of his time was spent with the 175th Postal Unit based out of Ft. Lewis, Wa. They were tasked with establishing and maintaining Postal Service during deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq. After leaving the service he moved to Western Pennsylvania where he attended Penn State and as Patrick says, "more significantly, met my wife Ronni. " They lived in PA for about 10 years before moving back to Illinois to help take care of his parents. Two years ago, the McFaddens began fostering Alice and Skylar. And in July of this year they were fortunate enough to adopt them. Patrick says he is honored to have been chosen to be a part of this team and looking forward to helping veterans in McLean County and beyond

### Ryan Renfro

Ryan Renfro is an Office Clerk in the Central Office. Ryan served over 10 years in the United States Navy in the GWOT in the Iraq Theatre. His first 6 years he spent as a Submariner with the last 4 years training new recruits as a Recruit Division Commander at Great Lakes Naval Base. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in History from the University of Illinois at Springfield and is perusing his Master's Degree in Public History at the University of Illinois at Springfield. Originally from Loami, IL he and his wife Kim live in New Berlin.

# Happy Thanksgiving!



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